

Agreement Between the Scottish Orienteering Association and the Capercaillie Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group on the Use of Forests for Orienteering Competitions and Training where Capercaillie are Present

This agreement achieves compliance with the current legislation regarding responsible access to the countryside for non-motorised recreational purposes covered by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the accompanying Scottish Outdoor Access Code, and the need to protect vulnerable habitats and species as covered by the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.

The Scottish Orienteering Association (SOA) will advise the Capercaillie Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group (Capercaillie BAP Group), via the Capercaillie Project Officer, of all areas they are using for orienteering training and competitions in the capercaillie core zones – Deeside/Aberdeenshire, Moray, Perthshire and Strathspey. See the list at the end of this agreement. This list will be reviewed annually by the Capercaillie BAP Group and the SOA advised of any areas which can be removed from the list.

The SOA or its affiliated clubs wishing to hold orienteering activities will initially approach the land manager responsible for these areas. The land manager will advise the club on the extent of any capercaillie presence in the area based on local knowledge. Within the period 1st March to 31st August, clubs should seek advice from the Capercaillie BAP Group Project Officer for the areas on the list at the end of this agreement.

If any specialist advice or surveys are required this will be requested from the Capercaillie BAP Group Project Officer.

Generally, restrictions will be as follows:

- Forest blocks with leks – no orienteering between 1 March and 31 August
- Forest blocks with known or probable capercaillie nesting and brood rearing – no orienteering between 15 April and 31 August.

The Capercaillie Project Officer will apply consistent advice based on capercaillie biology, but will seek site-specific opportunities to minimise any restrictions that are imposed. The SOA and its affiliated clubs will abide by these restrictions.

If any new areas are being considered for orienteering within the capercaillie core zones then the SOA will pass a copy of the OS map, highlighted with the exact area under consideration, to the Capercaillie Project Officer requesting information on whether restrictions apply. If capercaillie are present, a copy of the orienteering map

or Ordnance Survey map will be passed to the Capercaillie Project Officer for zoning. The Capercaillie Project Officer will inform the appropriate land managers of any suggestions made regarding areas within their ownership. The area will be added to the list at the end of this agreement.

Should the situation change regarding the location of capercaillie, either within already identified areas or into new areas which are to be used for orienteering, then the Capercaillie Project Officer will inform the SOA and appropriate advice given to the SOA and land manager. Should any areas previously identified become free of capercaillie, the Capercaillie Project Officer will advise the SOA, and any restrictions on access because of this agreement will be removed. This to be reviewed annually by the Capercaillie BAP Group.

The list of areas affected has been issued directly to the club involved.